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STATE FOR INR/OPS, NEA/IR AND EAP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/13/2019
TAGS: [PINR](#) [IR](#) [AS](#)
SUBJECT: REMOVAL OF ANTI-AMERICAN SLOGANS FROM TEHRAN'S
BUILDINGS UNLIKELY (C-NE9-00993)

REF: STATE 47326

Classified By: Political Counselor James F. Cole, for reason: 1.4 (c)

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Summary: The Australian Embassy in Tehran reports that no anti-American murals have been removed and believe it unlikely that city official responsible for beautification has the authority to remove or change them. End summary

[1](#)2. (S/NF) May 12, Justin Whyatt of the Middle East section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) read to poloff from a cable dated May 1 from Marc Innes-Brown, the Australian Ambassador in Tehran, in reference to the same questions that Embassy Canberra had sent him through DFAT. He answered only two of the original seven queries:

(U) --a. What, if any, anti-American slogans and murals are currently being replaced in Tehran, including those in Azadi Square and the "down with America" mural on Karim Khan Avenue?

(S/NF) --Answer: All the mentioned murals are untouched as of May 1 and there does not seem to be any substance to the reports concerning their removal in the near future. Anti-Americanism is rife and the press is full of articles blaming Americans for the recent deaths of Iranian pilgrims in Iraq although those deaths were by suicide bomber, which has not been a method regularly used by American forces.

(U) --b. The Agence France Presse (AFP) article mentions Mohammad Reza Sharif Kazemi as the city official in charge of the project, what is his position in the government?

(S/NF) --Answer: This gentleman is the Deputy for Planning and Preparing of the Beautification and Organization of Tehran, which is affiliated with the municipality although somewhat independent. This organization is in charge of recommendations for the artistic decoration, horticultural enhancement, lighting, architecture and urban design of Tehran. As an advisory body, it is unlikely that its deputy has the authority simply to replace murals that have public and governmental guardians.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Comment by the Australian ambassador: this story has very little legs. Undoubtedly, this functionary has a better artistic sensibility than the original muralists, but it is unlikely that his desired improvements to these squares will be realized very soon. Moreover, it is just as likely that any replacements would convey the original themes in a more aesthetically pleasing form.

[1](#)4. (S/NF) Comment: Whyatt said the foregoing information was sent to State by the Australian Embassy as of May 1.

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